

Valens and the Monks: Cudgeling and Conscription as a Means of Social Control

NOEL LENSKI

Even before his death at the battle of Adrianople (9 August 378), Emperor Valens (r. 364–378) had won a reputation as a religious persecutor. To be sure, much of the testimony about his attacks on fellow Christians has been exaggerated, in no small part because his death at the hands of the Goths seemed to contemporaries to confirm God's displeasure at his use of religious violence. Yet much of what the sources report is verifiable, for although Valens made serious efforts to avoid open persecution against Christians at the beginning of his reign, after the death of Athanasius of Alexandria in A.D. 373 he became increasingly violent toward religious resisters to his semi-Arian (homoian) beliefs. Among the more striking testimonies of Valens's cruelties stands a notice in Jerome's *Chronicle* for the year A.D. 375: "After passing a law that monks should serve as soldiers (*militarent*), Valens ordered those who refused to be beaten to death with cudgels (*fustibus*)."¹ The same notice was picked up by Prosper Tiro and the author of the Gallic Chronicle of 511² in their adaptations and continuations of Jerome's *Chronicle* and by the Latin epitomators Orosius and Jordanes,³ who relied heavily on Jerome's text in the production of their own histories. Apart from these, we have no further testimony of Valens's order. Thus, although related material about Valens's attacks on monks is reported in many sources, Jerome is the only independent source to testify directly to this particular law.

Primarily for this reason modern scholarship has often dismissed Jerome's notice, either as applicable only to Egypt or even as an outright fabrication.⁴ In what follows, I hope to show four things: first, that Valens did in fact issue a law valid throughout the

This article was completed while I held an Alexander von Humboldt Stipendium at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. I am grateful to Richard Burgess, Wendy Mayer, and the two anonymous referees, all of whom offered helpful advice and references.

¹ Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. R. Helm and U. Treu, GCS (Berlin, 1984), s.a. 375, p. 248: "Valens lege data ut monachi militarent, nolentes fustibus iussit interfici." Although by this period *militare* can be taken to mean either civilian or military service, I believe Jerome uses the word in its more traditional—strictly military—sense. The evidence presented below would seem to confirm this.

² *Prosperi Tironis Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH, AA 9 (Berlin, 1882), 1156, p. 459; *Chronica Gallica a. dxi*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH, AA 9 (Berlin, 1882), 502, p. 644.

³ *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH, AA 5 (Berlin, 1882), *Romana* 312, p. 40; *Pauli Orosii Historiarum Adversus Paganos* [hereafter Orosius], ed. C. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna, 1882), 7.33.1, p. 515. *Pauli Historiae Romanae*, ed. H. Droysen, MGH, AA 11 (Berlin, 1879), 11.8, p. 187, copies Orosius's notice.

⁴ H. G. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n-Natrun, Part II: The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis* (repr. New York, 1973), 82: "we must decide that the decree of Valens of 375 is mythical." H. C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Beiträge zur historischen

eastern empire which ordered monks to serve, as reported by Jerome; second, that Valens did have some monks beaten with cudgels, the common punishment for deserters; third, that Valens's law was motivated at least in part by military manpower deficits; and finally, that Valens was part of a larger group of Christians who scorned the extremes of the new monastic movement. To arrive at these conclusions, I begin by investigating Jerome's own credibility on the question, examine the broader pool of evidence for Valens's persecution of monks, and then turn to two independent pieces of evidence that seal the case for Jerome's accuracy: the first book of John Chrysostom's *Against Those Who Attack the Monastic Life* and the various redactions of the *Life of Isaac*. Finally, I conclude by putting Valens's anti-monastic sentiments in a broader context of hostility toward the new wave of monasticism which swept the Mediterranean in the second half of the fourth century.

I. JEROME'S CREDIBILITY

Jerome is, of course, commonly maligned for the inaccuracies which can be found in both his adaptation of Eusebius's *Chronici canones* and his own continuation of that work for the years between 326 and 378. Yet overall, his reports tend to be accurate, and they become more reliable the closer they come to the end of the work.⁵ This is because Jerome had finished the *Chronicle* by 380 or 381 and thus had witnessed—though not always at firsthand—the events recorded in the last years of this work.⁶ Given that there would have been only five or six years between the 375 law itself and the composition of the *Chronicle*, the likelihood of the notice's chronological and factual accuracy is strong. More important, Jerome may well have witnessed at firsthand Valens's attempts to draft monks in Syria. Between ca. 373 and 380 he lived in Syria, first in Antioch (ca. 373–375), later as an ascetic himself in the desert near Chalcis (ca. 375–377), and again in Antioch (ca. 377–380) before moving on to Constantinople, where he completed his *Chronicle*.⁷ This was precisely the time when Valens himself was residing in Antioch and various other cities associated with the defense of the eastern frontier.⁸

Theologie 73 (Tübingen, 1988), 238: "Die im Zusammenhang mit den ägyptischen Ereignissen berichteten furchtbaren Verfolgungen. . . gehören zum größten Teil ins Reich der erbaulichen Legende." M. Gaddis, "There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1999), 69 n. 86: "Although Nicene sources universally denounce Valens as a 'persecutor,' in fact specific and credible stories of violent persecution during his reign seem to come almost entirely from Egypt." Cf. I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1984), 155, who argues that ecclesiastical historians also fabricate Valens's condemnation of monks to the mines, on which, see below, p. 100–101.

⁵ See J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (New York, 1975), 72–75; M. D. Donalson, *A Translation of Jerome's Chronicon with Historical Commentary* (Lewiston, N.Y., 1996), 1–38; and esp. R. Burgess, "Jerome Explained: An Introduction to His Chronicle and a Guide to Its Use," *AHB* 16 (2002): 1–32. For Jerome's adaptation of Eusebius, see esp. R. Burgess and W. Witakowski, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 135 (Stuttgart, 1999), 23–25.

⁶ Kelly, *Jerome*, 68–72; Donalson, *Translation*, 4–6. On Jerome's sources for his continuation of the *Chronicle*, see R. Helm, "Hieronymus und Eutrop," *RhM* 76 (1927): 138–70, 254–306; Donalson, *Translation*, 19–38, 130–35, and Burgess, "Jerome Explained."

⁷ Kelly, *Jerome*, 36–67; S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 72 (Stuttgart, 1992), 76–114. Contrast A. D. Booth, "The Chronology of Jerome's Early Years," *Phoenix* 35 (1981): 237–59 on the chronology.

⁸ See T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998), 251–53, with full references.

Apart from the notice in the *Chronicle*, we also have testimony from two letters that Jerome had encountered monks directly affected by Valens's monastic persecutions. A letter written in 374 says that he had been in communication with a monk sent from Alexandria to visit a group of confessor monks then living in exile, apparently in Syria.⁹ In another letter, to Pope Damasus (ca. 376), he claims to have followed in the footsteps of the "Egyptian confessors" in his monastic retreat near Chalcis.¹⁰ This is not to say that he was himself conscripted under Valens's order, nor even that he suffered any form of persecution while a monk in Syria. This he reports nowhere in his extant corpus, a sure sign—coming from so prolix a self-promoter—that he had not suffered in the least.¹¹ All the same, he seems to have had direct and recent experience with Valens's law and its victims, as did many of his contemporary readers. It is thus difficult to believe that he accidentally distorted or even deliberately fabricated his report.

II. VALENS'S ATTACKS ON ASCETICS

There are good reasons to believe that Valens punished monks, and particularly Nicene monks, by drafting them into the army in 375. Early in his reign, Valens had made serious efforts to avoid persecuting those who dissented from his homoian version of the Christian faith.¹² Beginning with the death of Athanasius on 3 May 373, however, he unleashed a series of attacks against Nicenes more generally and ascetics in particular which lasted down to late 377.¹³ He began this more violent phase after riots broke out over the succession to Athanasius's see. While the Alexandrian homoians, with whom Valens was aligned, already had a consecrated bishop, Lucius, waiting in Antioch to fill Athanasius's post, the Nicene party of Athanasius imposed its own candidate, Peter, before Lucius could arrive. In the uprising which ensued, the *praefectus augustalis* of Egypt, Aelius Palladius, attempted to arrest Peter—who fled to Rome—and later received imperial troops whom he employed to quell the disturbances. We learn from a letter of Peter preserved in Theodoret that the *comes sacrarum largitionum* Vindaonius Magnus was dispatched to Alexandria with soldiers to impose Lucius, and that he subsequently put some nineteen Nicene supporters of Peter on trial. These he tortured and then exiled to the pagan city of Heliopolis (Baalbek) in Syria, thus provoking further uprisings by the Nicenes. In response, Magnus arrested many more, including twenty-three monks, and condemned them to hard labor in

⁹ Jerome, *Epistulae*, vol. 1, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 54, 2d ed. (Vienna, 1996), Ep. 3.2, p. 13: "quidam Alexandrinus monachus, qui ad Aegyptios confessores et voluntate iam martyres pio plebes fuerat transmissus obsequio."

¹⁰ Jerome, *Ep.* 15.2, p. 63: "hic collegas tuos Aegyptios confessores sequor et sub onerariis navibus parva navicula delitescio."

¹¹ Nor is this surprising, for Jerome was probably already forty-four years old in 375 and would have been of little use to Valens's army as a new recruit; cf. Kelly, *Jerome*, 337–39.

¹² On Valens's religious policies, see J. R. Palanque et al., *Histoire de l'Église*, vol. 3: *De la paix constantinienne à la mort de Théodose* (Paris, 1947), 257–76; Brennecke, *Studien*, 181–242; N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, 2002), 211–63.

¹³ For the date of Athanasius's death, see *Histoire "Acéphale" et index syriaque des lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, ed. A. Martin and M. Albert, SC 317 (Paris, 1985), 5.10, p. 165. On the vexed question of whether Valens curtailed his persecutions and recalled those he had exiled in 377, see R. Snee, "Valens' Recall of the Nicene Exiles and Anti-Arian Propaganda," *GRBS* 26 (1985): 395–419. Snee's concerns (405–10) that the extant *Vitae Isaacii* speak against our sources for Valens's recall of exiled Nicenes need not concern us, for Isaac was pleading not for the return of Nicene exiles but for their access to churches.

the mines.¹⁴ Thus from at least 373 Valens began using armed force to suppress resistance to his imposition of the homoian faith, and he seems to have shown particular antipathy toward monks.¹⁵

Nor were his attacks on non-homoians limited to Egypt. After his quotation from Peter's letter, Theodoret reports that, when protests over the Alexandrian situation broke out in Antioch, Valens had Nicene resisters there arrested and exiled to Neocaesarea in Pontus. Many of these were also monks.¹⁶ Other sources report the use of similar strong-arm tactics elsewhere at around the same time. In 373 Valens exiled Barses, the ascetic Nicene bishop of Edessa; around the same time he also exiled the Syrian Nicene priests Eulogius and Protogenes, the Nicene bishop of Batnae, Abramius, and the Nicene bishop of Syrian Laodicea, Pelagius.¹⁷ Sozomen reports that, among these, Barses and Eulogius were practicing monks.¹⁸ Further north, in 374 Valens exiled Eusebius, bishop of Samosata, to Thrace.¹⁹ And in the winter of 375/76 he had Hypsinus of Parnassus and Gregory of Nyssa exiled from the diocese of Pontica.²⁰ The death of Athanasius thus seems to have set off a

¹⁴ *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte* [hereafter Theodoret, *HE*], ed. L. Parmentier and G. C. Hansen, 3d ed., GCS (Berlin, 1998), 4.22.1–36, pp. 249–60. More on this persecution at *Epiphanius (Ancoratus und Panarion)* [hereafter Epiphanius, *Panarion*], ed. K. Holl, GCS, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1915–33), *Panarion* 68.11.4–8, 69.13.3, 73.38.1, vol. 3, pp. 151–52, 163, 312; *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours* 24–26 [hereafter Greg. Naz., *Or.*], ed. J. Mossay, SC 284 (Paris, 1981), 25.12–14, pp. 184–90; *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours* 32–37, ed. C. Moreschini and P. Gallay, SC 318 (Paris, 1985), 33.3–4, pp. 162–64; *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours* 42–43, ed. J. Bernardi, SC 384 (Paris, 1992), 43.46, p. 222; *Saint Basile Lettres* [hereafter Basil, *Ep.*], ed. Y. Courtonne, 3 vols. (Paris, 1957–66), *Ep.* 139, vol. 2, pp. 57–59; *Eusebius Werke II, Die Kirchengeschichte und die lateinische Übersetzung des Rufinus* [hereafter Rufinus, *HE*], ed. E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen, GCS (Leipzig, 1908), 11.3–6, pp. 1003–12; *Sokrates Kirchengeschichte* [hereafter Socrates], ed. G. C. Hansen, GCS (Berlin, 1995), 4.20.1–22.6, pp. 247–49; *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte* [hereafter Sozomen], ed. G. C. Hansen, GCS (Berlin, 1960), 6.19.1–20.5, pp. 260–61; Theodoret, *HE* 4.21.1–13, pp. 246–49. See also Brennecke, *Studien*, 236–38; T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 180–82; A. Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 216 (Rome, 1996), 789–807; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 234–63.

¹⁵ This wave of attacks probably also saw the exile (and subsequent recall?) of a group of Nitrian monastic leaders, including Isidore and the two Macarii (of Alexandria—who presided at Kellia—and “the Great”—who founded Scetis), to an island in the Nile: see Rufinus, *HE* 11.4, pp. 1007–8; Theodoret, *HE* 4.21.7–12, pp. 248–49; Socrates, 4.24.12–17, p. 258. Isidore was heralded for his defense of the faith with the moniker “confessor”: Jerome, *Ep.* 108.14, pp. 324–25; *The Lausiaca History of Palladius* [hereafter Palladius, *Lausiaca History*], ed. C. Butler, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 6.2 (Cambridge, 1904), 46.21, p. 34.

¹⁶ Theodoret, *HE* 4.22.36, p. 260. Though L. Parmentier, ed., *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte*, GCS, 3d rev. ed. (Berlin, 1998), 260 continues to punctuate this section as part of Peter's letter, it seems rather to be Theodoret's own report.

¹⁷ On Barses, see Theodoret, *HE* 4.16.1–3, pp. 237–38; cf. Basil, *Epp.* 264, 267, vol. 3, pp. 126–27, 136–37. On Eulogius and Protogenes, see Theodoret, *HE* 4.18.1–13, 5.4.6, pp. 239–42, 283; cf. *Itinerarium Egeriae*, ed. A. Franceschini and R. Weber, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 19.2–5, 20.2, pp. 59–60, 62. On Abramius, see *Itinerarium Egeriae*, 19.1, p. 59 with Basil, *Ep.* 132, vol. 2, p. 46. On Pelagius, see Theodoret, *HE* 4.4.13.2–3, p. 233; *Theophanis Chronographia* [hereafter Theophanes], ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig, 1883), a.m. 5866, p. 61.

¹⁸ Sozomen, 6.34.1, pp. 289–90. For monastic bishops in Syria, see A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, vol. 2: *Early Monasticism in Mesopotamia and Syria*, CSCO 197 (Louvain, 1960), 119–20.

¹⁹ Theodoret, *HE* 4.13.2, 14.1.–7, pp. 233–35; Greg. Naz., *Or.* 33.5, vol. 318, p. 166; Basil, *Epp.* 177–79, 243, vol. 2, pp. 113–15, vol. 3, p. 69. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, 113–14, quotes from a Syriac life of Eusebius published by P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, vol. 6 (Leipzig, 1896), 335–77, which alludes to Valens's persecutions along the upper Euphrates, including references to attacks on monks.

²⁰ Basil, *Epp.* 225, 231, 237, 239, vol. 3, pp. 21–23, 36–38, 55–57, 59–61; *Gregor von Nazianz Briefe* [hereafter Greg. Naz., *Ep.*], ed. P. Gallay, GCS (Berlin, 1969), *Epp.* 72, 74, pp. 64–65; *Gregorii Nysseni Opera Ascetica*, ed.

firestorm of coercion and expulsions calculated to suppress resistance to the homoian faith by Nicenes, and particularly monks.

Immediately preceding his notice about the drafting of monks into service, Jerome reports, still under the year 375: “many of the monks of Nitria were killed by tribunes and soldiers.”²¹ By Nitria, Jerome probably meant not just the village of this name, ca. 60 km southeast of Alexandria, but the larger surrounding desert to its south and west near which the monastic centers of Nitria (Kom al-Barnugi), Kellia (Kousour al-Rubbeyat), and Scetis (Wadi en-Natrun) sprang up and grew prodigiously in the mid-fourth century.²² Jerome’s notice would appear to be related to a report in Rufinus’s *Ecclesiastical History*:

At whose [Lucius’s] first entry [i.e., into Alexandria in mid-373], such great and awful deeds were done against virgins and ascetics of the church which were not reported even in the persecution of the pagans. And then, after the flights and exiles of his citizens, after the slaughters and tortures and flames by which he murdered countless people, he turned the weapons of his wrath against the monasteries; he destroyed the desert and declared war against those living in peace; he went to besiege three thousand or more men spread all across the desert in their secret and solitary dwellings, and sent armed bands of cavalry and infantry, tribunes, commanders, and war generals as if he had selected them to fight against the barbarians.²³

The most striking thing about this passage is its implication that Lucius’s assumption of the Alexandrian see brought two separate waves of religious violence, the first immediately following his arrival in 373 and the second some time later.²⁴ It is apparently this second wave which Jerome’s notice on the “monks of Nitria” records and thus dates to 375. Rufinus was, of course, an excellent source on the monastic communities of Egypt in the 370s, for he was living among them at this time and could later boast in his *Apology*: “my faith was proven in prisons and exiles, brought on because of faith, in the time of the persecution of the heretics, when I lived among the blessed church of Alexandria.”²⁵ Nor

W. Jaeger, J. P. Cavaernos, and V. Woods Callahan, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 8.1 (Leiden, 1952), *Vita Macrinae* 2.192, p. 394; *Grégoire de Nysse Lettres*, ed. P. Maraval, SC 363 (Paris, 1990), *Epp.* 18, 22, pp. 232–40, 274.

²¹ Jerome, *Chronicon*, s.a. 375, p. 248: “Multi monachorum Nitriae per tribunos et milites caesi.”

²² That the persecution reached as far as Scetis is confirmed by mention of Macarius the Great of Scetis among its victims, above, note 15. On the topography of these monastic communities, see Evelyn-White, *Monasteries Part II*, 17–72; idem, *The Monasteries of the Wadi ‘n-Natrun, Part III: The Architecture and Archaeology* (repr. New York, 1973), 3–32; R. Bagnall and D. Rathbone, *Egypt from Alexander to the Copts: An Archaeological and Historical Guide* (London, 2004), 107–15.

²³ Rufinus, *HE* 11.3, p. 1004: “cuius primo ingressu tanta et tam turpia in virgines et continentes ecclesiae gesta sunt, quae nec in persecutionibus gentilium memorantur. Inde post fugas civium et exilia, post caedes et tormenta flammasque quibus innumeros confecerat, ad monasteria furoris sui arma convertit. Vastat heremum et bella quiescentibus indicit. Tria milia simul aut eo amplius viros per totam heremum secreta et solitaria habitatione dispersos oppugnare pariter adgreditur, mittit armatam equitum ac peditum manum, tribunos, praepositos et bellorum duces tamquam adversum barbaros pugnaturus elegit.” Cf. Socrates, 4.22.4–6, 24.1–12, pp. 249, 257; Sozomen, 6.20.1–12, 31.7–9, pp. 261–63, 287; Theodoret, *HE* 4.22.35, pp. 259–60; *Suida Lexicon*, ed. A. Adler (Leipzig, 1933), O 764, p. 575; Orosius, 7.33.2–4, p. 516. Other sources on this monastic persecution at Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.11.6, 72.11.1, vol. 3, pp. 152, 265; Facundus, *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulorum* [hereafter Facundus, *Pro def.*], ed. J.-M. Clément and R. Vander Plaetse, CCSL 90A (Turnhout, 1974), 4.2.47–51, pp. 116–17; Greg. Naz., *Or.* 25.3, 12, 14, vol. 284, pp. 160–62, 184–86, 188–90.

²⁴ Cf. Socrates, 4.24.3, p. 257, which also makes it clear that the attacks on Egyptian monasteries came only after Euzoius, who had accompanied Lucius from Antioch to Alexandria, had returned to his see.

²⁵ *Tyrannii Rufini Opera, Apologia ad Anastasium*, ed. M. Simonetti, CCSL 20 (Turnhout, 1961), 2, p. 25: “Quamvis fides nostra persecutionis haereticorum tempore, cum in sancta Alexandrina ecclesia degeremus, in carceribus et exiliis, quae pro fide inferebantur, probata sit.” See also Rufinus, *HE* 11.4, p. 1005: “quae prae-

is his eyewitness testimony to these events unique. The Egyptian Piamun reported to John Cassian that he had traveled with monks from Egypt and the Thebaid who had been exiled to the mines of Pontus and Armenia under Valens in the 370s.²⁶ Palladius catalogued Nitrian monks he had met who had been imprisoned or exiled under Valens and narrated at length how his friend the Roman aristocrat Melania the Elder cared for and fed great multitudes of Egyptian monks together with eleven bishops and a priest—themselves monks—exiled by Valens to Diocaesarea in Palestine.²⁷ Theodoret mentions this same group of eleven bishops (omitting the priest), and Melania's contemporary Epiphanius of Salamis actually preserves a letter addressed to these confessors which lists all eleven of their names.²⁸ Another of Melania's contemporaries, Basil of Caesarea, also wrote to three of the Egyptian bishops exiled to Palestine in a letter which is preserved, and the sixth-century African bishop Facundus actually transmits a fragment of a letter from the same confessors apparently composed while they were in exile.²⁹

To add to this very specific and credible evidence for the Egyptian persecution, two more letters of Basil survive which are directed specifically to "monks harassed by the Arians."³⁰ One of these reveals, in guarded language, that a large group of monks from Syria had also been violently attacked and expelled from their dwellings, which were burned.³¹ A similar report can be found in Theodoret, who testifies that, late in Valens's reign, the Syrian monk Zeugmatius was set upon for his defense of the Nicene faith and his hut burned.³² Both Basil's and Theodoret's testimony would seem to add depth to Jerome's report about attacks on Nitrian monks in 375, for both make it clear that similar attacks occurred outside Egypt. Moreover, Basil's letter can even help us confirm the date of this

sens vidi, loquor, et eorum gesta refero, quorum in passionibus socius esse promerui." Cf. Rufinus, *HE* 11.8, p. 1013; Jerome, *Ep.* 3.1–2, pp. 12–14; Socrates, 4.24.8, p. 257. Jerome later questioned Rufinus's claim to the status of confessor: *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera III, Opera Polemica Contra Rufinum*, ed. P. Lardet, CCL 79 (Turnhout, 1982), *Apologia Contra Rufinum* 2.3–4, 10, pp. 35–36 and *Epistula Adversus Rufinum* 26, p. 97. More on Rufinus's monastic period in Egypt at F. X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345–411): His Life and Works*, Catholic University of America Studies in Mediaeval History n.s. 6 (Washington, D.C., 1945), 28–58; cf. Booth, "Chronology," 248–51.

²⁶ *Jean Cassien Conférences* [hereafter John Cassian, *Collationes*], ed. E. Pichery, SC 64 (Paris, 1959), 18.7, p. 21: "temporibus siquidem Luci, qui Arrianae perfidiae episcopus fuit, sub Valentis imperio, dum diaconiam nostris fratribus deferimus, his videlicet qui de Aegypto et Thebaida fuerant ob catholicae fidei perseverantiam metallis Ponti atque Armeniae relegati etc."

²⁷ *Palladius Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome*, vol. 1 [hereafter Palladius, *Dial.*], ed. A.-M. Malingrey and P. Leclercq, SC 341 (Paris, 1988), 17.16–21, p. 332; *Lausiaca History*, 46.3–4, pp. 134–35; cf. *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Epistulae*, ed. G. de Hartel and M. Kamptner, 2d ed., CSEL 29 (Vienna, 1999), *Ep.* 29.11, pp. 257–58, and F. X. Murphy, "Melania the Elder: A Biographical Note," *Traditio* 5 (1947): 59–77, who improves the chronology of E. Schwartz, "Palladiana," *ZNW* 36 (1937): 161–204 at 161–66. The number 5,000, given by Palladius and Paulinus, is surely inflated to correspond with Jesus's feeding of the masses at Mt. 14:21, Mk. 6:44, Lk. 9:14, and Jn. 6:10.

²⁸ Theodoret, *HE* 4.22.35, pp. 259–60; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 72.11.1, vol. 3, p. 265.

²⁹ Basil, *Ep.* 265, vol. 3, pp. 127–33; Facundus, *Pro def.* 4.2.47–51, pp. 116–17. From these various sources, we can assemble the following names of confessor monks: Aaron, Adelphius, Alexander, Ammonius, Anoubion, Eulogius, Euphratation, Harpocratation, Hierax, Isaac, Isidore, Pambo, Paphnutius, Pit(s?)imius; cf. Martin, *Athanase*, 793 n. 11.

³⁰ Basil, *Epp.* 256–57, vol. 3, pp. 96–100.

³¹ *Ep.* 256, vol. 3, pp. 96–97. Among the addressees, Acacius has been identified as the Syrian monk/priest who would later become bishop of Beroea (Aleppo).

³² Theodoret, *HE* 4.28.2, p. 268. The notice is roughly datable by its mention of the involvement of the general Traianus, resident in Syria between 374 and 377, cf. *PLRE* 1: Traianus 2.

round of violence. His letter to the Syrian monks has been independently dated to just after Easter 375 and describes events which had occurred earlier that year.³³

Equally plausible in Jerome's notice about attacks on monks in 375 is the implication that Valens fostered a pronounced antipathy toward ascetics. Valens and his brother and co-emperor Valentinian were both extremely pragmatic men. Together with frontier defense, their chief concern was the efficient administration of the imperial, provincial, and curial bureaucracies.³⁴ Both were thus more than mildly perturbed with the drain on manpower and tax resources represented by the rise of an ecclesiastical aristocracy and above all the rise of the monastic "holy man." Both thus issued several laws in the period between 370 and 371 ordering all clergy of curial descent to be defrocked and returned to their *curiae*, a measure in direct contravention of Constantinian precedent.³⁵ More importantly, we have several sources that indicate that around the same time, Valens was working hard to insure that all monks were enrolled on the tax registers. Most monks were of course considered laypeople rather than clergy and were thus subject at least to *capitatio*, even if they had abandoned all their property and thus escaped *iugatio*. Nevertheless, many monks seem by and large to have avoided taxes until the early 370s when, in an extant letter, Basil pleads with a local tax assessor (*peraequator*) not to enroll the monks under his guidance on the census register.³⁶ A lengthy poem by Gregory of Nazianzos written to Hellenius (*peraequator* in 372) explains further, for in it Gregory carries on an extended lament about a "harsh law" which seems to have recently ordered monks to be enrolled on tax lists.³⁷ With these laws Valens and Valentinian demonstrated that they would brook no interference from the new monastic movement with the proper running of the state and its tax resources.

Even more striking, Valens issued a law in 373, ordering the *comes orientis* to enforce harsh restrictions against monks of curial descent:

Certain devotees of idleness (*quidam ignaviae sectatores*), having deserted the compulsory services of the municipalities (*desertis civitatum muneribus*), have betaken themselves to soli-

³³ On the date, see W.-D. Hauschild, trans. and comm., *Basilius von Caesarea: Briefe*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, 1990), 223 n. 398. Rufinus provides further confirmation about the date of this second wave of attacks when he claims that they were carried out by Tatianus, apparently when he was *comes sacrarum largitionum* from 374 to 380; cf. Barnes, *Athanasius*, 297–98 n. 7.

³⁴ See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 264–319.

³⁵ *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis* [hereafter *CTh*], ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1904), 16.2.19, p. 841 (a. 370), 16.2.21, pp. 841–42 (a. 371), cf. 12.1.59, pp. 677–78 (a. 364), 16.2.17, p. 840 (a. 364), 13.3.7, p. 742 = *Corpus Iuris Civilis II, Codex Iustinianus* [hereafter *CJ*], ed. P. Krueger (Berlin, 1877), 10.53.8, p. 422 (a. 369), and Basil, *Epp.* 104, 237, 284, vol. 2, pp. 4–5, vol. 3, pp. 55–57, 155, with B. Treucker, *Politische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zu den Basilius-Briefen* (Munich, 1961), 74–82; T. A. Kopecek, "Curial Displacements and Flight in Later Fourth-Century Cappadocia," *Historia* 23 (1974): 319–42; R. C. Teja, *Organización económica y social de Cappadocia en el siglo IV, según los Padres Capadocios* (Salamanca, 1974), 56–65. For the laws of Constantine and his sons allowing clerics exemption from curial service, see C. Vogler, *Constance II et l'administration impériale* (Strasbourg, 1979), 262–67; T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 50.

³⁶ Basil, *Ep.* 284, vol. 3, p. 155, with Teja, *Organización*, 60–63.

³⁷ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Carmina* 2.1:85–98, PG 37:1451–77, esp. line 95 νόμου . . . ἀπηνέος. This section of the poem appears to offer quotations from the law, no longer extant, which jibe well with *CTh* 12.1.63, p. 678, quoted in the text immediately following. According to Gregory, the law accused monks of being "more zealous than fitting for reasoned piety" and asked if it was right for "those who honor God to seek destruction." Hellenius's tenure as *peraequator* is datable to 372 by Basil, *Ep.* 98, vol. 1, pp. 211–13; cf. S. Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), 153 n. 48.

tudes and secret places, and under the pretext of religion have joined with bands of monks (*cum coetibus monazonton*). We command, therefore, by our well considered precept, that such persons and others of this kind who have been apprehended within Egypt shall be routed out from their hiding places by the *comes orientis* and shall be recalled to the performance of the compulsory public services of their municipalities.³⁸

Though this copy of the law speaks specifically of Egypt, it was addressed to the praetorian prefect of the East, Modestus, and posted in Beirut, both of which imply that it had general validity throughout Valens's realm, even if it has survived only in a copy applicable to Egypt.³⁹ The law is striking for several reasons. First, it is the first extant law to use the word "monk" and thus the first extant law to represent any attempt by an emperor to control the growing mass movement represented by monasticism.⁴⁰ Second, it reveals quite explicitly Valens's harsh attitude toward this new movement, which he regarded as little more than an excuse for idleness. Finally, in its language, it links monks directly with "desertion" and all that it entailed. This was in many ways a connection which the monks themselves fostered by having imposed the idea of *anachoresis* (social and geographical withdrawal) onto the much older Christian ideal of *askesis* (physical temperance). The text is thus simultaneously a binding legal enactment forcing the removal of men of curial rank from their monastic retreats and an ideological critique of the entire monastic enterprise.

The question remains, however, whether Valens's antipathy toward monks would have led him to issue a law ordering them to be drafted into service. Part of the answer can be found by turning once again to our sources for Valens's imposition of Lucius onto the see of Alexandria in 373 and his attack, with the help of Lucius, on monks in 375. In both of these incidents, Valens appears not merely to have attacked ascetics, but also to have punished their "idleness" by employing their services for the benefit of the state. The twenty-three monks who were first punished on the orders of Vindaonius Magnus in 373 were not killed, but were condemned to hard labor in the quarries of Proconnesus (Marmara) and the copper mines of Phaeno (Feinan). In that same year, a deacon sent by Bishop Peter from Rome was captured, tried, and also sent to Phaeno.⁴¹ The monks Piamun claimed to have met in Pontus and Armenia were serving in mines and quarries during their exile as well.⁴² So too, Gregory of Nazianzos, Rufinus, and Sozomen refer explicitly to monks con-

³⁸ *CTh* 12.1.63, p. 678, trans. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (New York, 1952), 351. On the date, see F. Pergami, *La legislazione di Valentiniano e Valente (364–375)* (Milan, 1993), 133–34. For analysis, see G. Barone Adesi, *Monachesimo ortodosso d'Oriente e diritto romano nel tardo antico* (Milan, 1990), 125–33, 195–203. *CTh* 12.18.1, pp. 732–33 (a. 367) may be an early attempt to accomplish the same ends, but too little of the original law survives to confirm this.

³⁹ The copy of the law at *CJ* 10.32.26, p. 412, may imply the same, for it makes no mention of Egypt or the *comes orientis*. J. F. Matthews, *Laying Down the Law: A Study of the Theodosian Code* (New Haven, Conn., 2000), 159–64, explains well how general laws can often appear to have limited scope because the code preserves only an exemplar directed to a specific official. On this point, contrast J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth. The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1995), 51 n. 86.

⁴⁰ For the legal control of monasticism, see Barone Adesi, *Monachesimo*.

⁴¹ Theodoret, *HE* 4.22.26–28, pp. 257–58. Condemnation to the mines was a particularly harsh choice of punishments for Valens to impose given its connections with the pagan persecutions. See Eusèbe de Césarée *Histoire Ecclésiastique Livres VIII–X et Les Martyrs en Palestine*, ed. G. Bardy, SC 55 (Paris, 1958), *Martyrs of Palestine* 5.2–3, 7.2–4, 8.13, 9.1, 11.5–6, 13.1–2, pp. 136–38, 141–42, 147–48, 157–58; cf. F. Millar, "Condemnation to Hard Labour in the Roman Empire, from the Julio-Claudians to Constantine," *PBSR* 52 (1984): 124–47 at 137–43.

⁴² John Cassian, *Collationes* 18.7, p. 21: "metallis Ponti atque Armeniae relegati." *Metallum* refers to both mines and quarries.

demned to the mines in connection with the 375 persecution.⁴³ This exploitation of monastic manpower for mineral extraction is especially striking because we know from other sources that Valens was extremely desperate to assemble miners in precisely this period. Financial deficits resulting from Valens's reform of the coinage between 367 and 369 had created serious gaps in the imperial money supply, forcing him to impose harsh new regulations on mining designed to increase mineral production.⁴⁴ The condemnation of the monks to the mines was thus not simply a punishment well suited to their crime of idleness, but represented a serious effort to match manpower resources to recognized imperial needs.

At the same time, however, Valens was experiencing another serious manpower deficit in the realm of military recruiting. We have a total of twelve laws of Valens and Valentinian designed to enforce recruitment into the army,⁴⁵ and we have several indications in the papyri that Valens in particular was desperate for new sources of military manpower.⁴⁶ The longest and most elaborate of these laws was issued in precisely 375,⁴⁷ a year when Valens witnessed a major uprising in the territory of Isauria just as he was preparing a military expedition into Persia.⁴⁸ Valens's need for new soldiers thus seems to have peaked in precisely the year he chose to suppress monks for their continued resistance to his religious policies. There is every reason to think that, with this in mind, he might have drafted at least some young and able-bodied monks into the army just as he had diverted others to the mines.⁴⁹ Monks were, after all, scarcely different from deserters in his mind, as his 373 law indicates. Perhaps for this reason Valens's law—as reported by Jerome—ordered those who were unwilling to serve to be beaten with rods (*fustes*). *Fustuarium* was, of course, the traditional punishment inflicted for military desertion.⁵⁰

⁴³ Greg. Naz., *Or.* 33.4, vol. 318, p. 164; Rufinus, *HE* 11.6, 13, pp. 1011, 1019–20; Sozomen, 6.38.8, p. 298.

⁴⁴ *CTh* 10.19.5–7, 9, pp. 558–59; cf. *Themistii Orationes Quae Supersunt*, ed. H. Schenkl and G. Downey, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1965), *Or.* 11.152c, 14.181b, pp. 228, 261; *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum Gestarum Libri Qui Supersunt* [hereafter *Ammianus*], ed. V. Gardthausen (Stuttgart, 1967), 31.6.6, p. 247; Basil, *Ep.* 110, vol. 2, pp. 11–12, with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 303–5.

⁴⁵ *CTh* 6.4.21, 7.1.5, 8, 13.2–7, 18.1, 22.7–8, 12.1.78, pp. 255, 310–11, 336–38, 344, 357–58, 682, with E. Garrido González, “Relación entre sociedad y ejército en el reinado de Valentiniano I visto a través de la legislación,” *Latomus* 46 (1987): 841–46.

⁴⁶ L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, eds., *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyrskunde*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1912; repr. Hildesheim, 1963), no. 469, pp. 553–54; *Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig*, vol. 1, ed. L. Mitteis (Leipzig, 1906), nos. 34–35, pp. 110–17; cf. Basil, *Ep.* 88, vol. 1, p. 192, with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 307–19.

⁴⁷ *CTh* 7.13.7, p. 329 (2 June 375). C. Zuckerman, “Two Reforms of the 370s: Recruiting Soldiers and Senators in the Divided Empire,” *REB* 56 (1998): 79–139, offers a comprehensive review of Valens's recruiting policies in which he argues that this law constituted the introduction of an entirely new system of recruitment.

⁴⁸ N. Lenski, “Basil and the Isaurian Uprising of A.D. 375,” *Phoenix* 53 (1999): 308–29, and Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 181–82.

⁴⁹ Julian had also ordered monks to be drafted into the army; see *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, ed. A.-J. Festugière, SubsHag 34 (Brussels, 1961), 10–13, pp. 50–51. He also used military conscription in Cappadocian Caesarea to punish clergymen whom he blamed for the destruction of a pagan temple: Sozomen, 5.4.4, p. 197; cf. *Imperatoris Caesaris Flavii Claudii Iuliani Epistulae, Leges, Poemata, Fragmenta Varia*, ed. I. Bidez and F. Cumont (Paris, 1922) [hereafter *Ep.*], 205, pp. 282–84.

⁵⁰ Examples at *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford, 1988), s.v. *fustis* 2b, *fustuarium*, p. 751; cf. *CTh* 7.18.8, p. 346, and *Corpus Iuris Civilis I, Digesta*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1895), 49.16.3.16, p. 836. More at J. Gebhardt, *Prügelstrafe und Züchtigungsrecht im antiken Rom und in der Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1994), esp. 46–59 and 110–11 on the role of beating as a military punishment. Valentinian and Valens issued a law in 365 (*CTh* 7.18.1, p. 344) condemning those who harbored deserters to the mines. More on the connection between monastic flight and military desertion in R. Rémondon, “Problèmes militaires en Égypte et dans l'empire à la fin du IV^e siècle,” *RH* 213 (1955): 21–38 at 32–38; cf. Martin, *Athanase*, 794–95.

Nor was Valens entirely mistaken to regard the monastic movement as a threat to his military manpower supply. We have a number of indications contemporary with Valens that young men were often faced with a choice between a monastic and a military life. In a letter dated to 372, Basil of Caesarea encouraged a certain Firminus, a young man of curial descent who had earlier resolved on an ascetic life, to give up the military career he had later embarked upon and return to his hometown. Firminus's response is also preserved in Basil's correspondence and shows that he had already decided to return to asceticism and was plying friends at court to secure a discharge, even if it went against "the royal mandates."⁵¹ What precisely these last involved we can no longer say, but their mention indicates that Valens was aware of the challenge posed to military careers by monasticism already by 372 and had thus issued mandates to prevent soldiers from fleeing to monastic retreats.⁵² Similarly, in a nearly contemporary treatise which I will soon examine in more detail, John Chrysostom describes a young man who yearned to be a monk despite his military father's insistence that he take up the sword. The boy's mother, who favored his monastic ambitions, arranged that his teacher should be a monk who could indoctrinate him in his early youth. When the boy came of age, he naturally ran away to the desert rather than be forced to live up to his father's expectations; he was induced to return home and practice a domestic form of asceticism only by his father's threats to call down imperial authorities on the monks who were harboring him.⁵³ Here again, monastic and military ambitions clashed, and the imperial government seems to have become involved in attempting to exercise pressure toward the latter. In the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, we learn of two military tribunes who were converted to the ascetic life after an encounter with the two Macarii, who flourished in the time of Valens.⁵⁴ In the West, another contemporary of Valens, Martin of Tours, provides yet another example of a young man who was forced into military service despite his desire to live as a holy man and who eventually secured his own discharge through insubordination.⁵⁵ Finally, in a famous passage in the *Confessions*, Augustine reports a related incident, also datable to the 370s, about two secret service agents (*agentes in rebus*) who were induced to abandon their careers for the monastery after reading a translation of the *Life of Anthony*.⁵⁶ The tug of war between a

⁵¹ Basil, *Epp.* 116 and 117, vol. 2, pp. 20–23, esp. πέπεισμαι δὲ ἐν τοιούτοις μείζον τῶν βασιλικῶν προστάγμάτων τὴν προαίρεσιν ἡμῶν ἰσχύειν. Cf. the related *Ep.* 54, pp. 139–40, on young men who joined the clergy to avoid conscription.

⁵² We know from a letter of Libanius (*Libanii Opera*, vol. 11, *Epistulae* 840–1544, ed. R. Foerster [Leipzig, 1922], *Ep.* 1048, pp. 170–72) to the same Firminus written in 392 that he was able to retire from service only in this year. His petition to leave the service under Valens seems not to have succeeded. Previous interpretations of this case can be found in Treucker, *Politische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien*, 90–93; Kopecek, "Curial Displacements," 327–34.

⁵³ John Chrysostom, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* [hereafter John Chrysostom, *Adv. oppug.*], 3.12, PG 47:369–70.

⁵⁴ *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 23, p. 131.

⁵⁵ Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 2.1–4.9, SC 133:254–62.

⁵⁶ Augustinus, *Confessiones*, ed. M. Skutella (Stuttgart, 1996), 8.6[15], pp. 165–66, esp.: "relicta militia saeculari servire tibi." On this famous passage, which some have argued refers to Jerome himself and his friend Bonosus, see J. J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions: Text and Commentary*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1992), 3:39–42. See also the case of Marathonius, who gave up his military career to found monastic communities in Constantinople in the 350s (Sozomen, 4.27.4, p. 184, with Elm, *Virgins*, 111–12), that of Innocentius, who surrendered an unspecified government post to practice asceticism on the Mount of Olives (Palladius, *Lausiac History*, 44.1–2, p. 32), and that of Dalmatus, discussed below, p. 112. Earlier, Pachomios had also been a conscript: *ODB* 3:1549–50.

monastic and military career was thus very real in the 370s and was probably precisely what Valens hoped to control with his law ordering monks to serve.

We have thus seen solid evidence that Valens despised monasticism and that he attacked monks in Egypt and elsewhere in 373 and more spectacularly in 375. It should also be clear that he had good reason to attempt to draft monks into the army and that he had a track record of forcing monks to labor for the benefit of the state. In the two sections that follow, two previously unexploited sources for the problem are brought to bear. First, I examine the first book of John Chrysostom's *Against Those Who Attack the Monastic Life* in order to demonstrate that Valens's attacks on monks in Syria were decried by contemporaries. In the following section, I show that the various recensions of the early Byzantine *Life of Isaac* further demonstrate that Valens actually did succeed in drawing this monk into armed service, albeit with predictably disappointing results.

III. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S *AGAINST THOSE WHO ATTACK THE MONASTIC LIFE*

Any attempt to link John Chrysostom's *Against Those Who Attack the Monastic Life* (*Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae*) to a specific historical event raises the question of date. Chrysostom's entire corpus, and particularly the material from his years in Antioch (ca. 368–398), is extremely difficult to pinpoint chronologically. *Adversus oppugnatores* is no exception. The only available published text, in *Patrologia Graeca*, was edited and introduced by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), who dated the work to 375/76 based precisely on what seem to be allusions in the first book to the monastic persecutions of Valens.⁵⁷ In his biography of John Chrysostom, however, J. N. D. Kelly moved the dating forward to the period between 379 and 383. His sole criterion for this change was a passage from early in the first book of the treatise in which Chrysostom expresses his surprise that such vindictive persecutions would occur “while our emperors live in piety (*eusebeia*).”⁵⁸ By Kelly's reading, this statement cannot refer to the Arianizing Valens and his brother Valentinian, who ruled jointly between 364 and 375, but only to Nicene emperors, most likely, Kelly argues, Gratian and Theodosius I, who ruled jointly between 379 and 383.⁵⁹ M. Illert picks up Kelly's argument in his comprehensive treatment of Chrysostom's early ascetic works and builds on it to narrow the date further to 381. This he does by adducing parallels between some of Chrysostom's arguments and a series of attacks leveled against monks by Chrysostom's former teacher Libanius in a speech datable to 380/81.⁶⁰

Illert's parallels between Chrysostom and Libanius are convincing, but in many ways misleading for purposes of dating the entire *Adversus oppugnatores*. He is indeed right to place the second and third books of this three-book work in 381 based on the parallels with

⁵⁷ PG 47:317–18; cf. C. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, 2 vols., trans. M. Gonzaga (Westminster, Md., 1959), 115.

⁵⁸ *Adv. oppug.* 1.2, PG 47:321: ὅθεν καὶ πολλῆς ἐμπέπλησμαι τῆς ἀπορίας, ὅτι τῶν βασιλέων ἐν εὐσεβείᾳ ζώντων, τοιαῦτα σὺ λέγεις ἐν μέσαις τολμάσθαι ταῖς πόλεσιν.

⁵⁹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 51–52: “In John's parlance the expression must denote orthodox, i.e. Nicene-minded, emperors, and would most naturally refer to Gratian and Theodosius I.” See also R. Brändle, “Johannes Chrysostomus I,” *RAC* 18: 426–503 at 429–30.

⁶⁰ M. Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus und das antiochenisch-syrische Mönchtum: Studien zu Theologie, Rhetorik und Kirchenpolitik im antiochenischen Schrifttum des Johannes Chrysostomus* (Zurich, 2000), 12–17, with special reference to parallels between Lib., *Or.* 2.30–32, pp. 248–49 and John Chrysostom, *Adv. oppug.* 2.2. PG 47:333–34.

Libanius. He is mistaken, however, in assuming that book 1 was composed at the same time and that all three books form a single, original unit of composition. Indeed, where book 1 seems to imply that Chrysostom is still living a sequestered, monastic life and thus has to learn of the monastic persecutions through secondhand reportage,⁶¹ in books 2 and 3 the author speaks as if he is no longer a practicing ascetic.⁶² This can already give us some idea about dating, for Chrysostom's period of ascetic withdrawal seems to have stretched from 372 until 378.⁶³ It would thus seem that books 2 and 3 were written in 381, but book 1 some time before the death of Valens. Illert muddles this distinction between the two halves of this work by mistakenly attributing the parallels he adduces between Libanius and Chrysostom to the first book.⁶⁴ In fact, all occur at the beginning of the second book. There is also a difference of tone and rhetorical strategy between the first and the second and third books. The second and third books set up parallel rhetorical scenarios based around hypothetical fathers whose arguments against the asceticism of their sons are presented and then refuted: the second aims its barbs against a fictional pagan father—modeled on Libanius—while the third refutes a fictional Christian. Book 1, by contrast, attempts to stave off not hypothetical detractors, but actual, physical threats.⁶⁵ We will see below that Chrysostom's description of these threats resonates well with Jerome's notice about a centrally issued law which led to the beating, even to death, of monks.

Now that we recognize the distinction between the two parts of *Adversus oppugnatores*, we can reach firmer conclusions about the dating of book 1. A problem remains, however, in that the reference to “pious emperors” used by Kelly to date the work to 379–383 occurs in book 1 and might thus vitiate an earlier dating for this section as well. On closer inspection, however, Kelly's argument must be rejected. Montfaucon had already noticed the reference when he dated the work to 375, but he read it correctly as an allusion to the emperors' Christianity as opposed to paganism, with the plural emperors being Valens, his brother Valentinian I, and Valentinian's son Gratian (ruled jointly 367–375) or perhaps Valens and his two nephews Gratian and Valentinian II (ruled jointly 375–378).⁶⁶ A closer

⁶¹ Esp. *Adv. oppug.* 1.2, PG 47:320–21: ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἀνέκραζά τε εὐθέως ἀκούσας, καὶ τὸν εἰπόντα συνεχῶς ἀνηρώτων, εἰ μὴ παῖζοι ταῦτα λέγων. On John's monastic period, see now Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomos*, 95–106, which supplants previous work.

⁶² John's story at *Adv. oppug.* 3.12, PG 47:369–70, indicates that he had to go as an outsider to visit the monk he describes: τοῦτω προσελθὼν ἐγὼ τῷ παιδαγωγῷ, καὶ γὰρ τῶν ἐν ὄρεσι καθημένων ἐτύγγανεν ὢν. So, too, his use of the first person plural at *Adv. oppug.* 3.18, PG 47:380, indicates that he perceives himself as a nonmonastic at the time of writing: μὴ τοίνυν μηδὲ ἡμεῖς πρὸ ὥρας ἀπάγωμεν τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐρημίαν διατριβῆς τοὺς υἱοὺς, ἀλλ' ἐάσωμεν αὐτοῖς ἐμπαγῆναι τὰ μαθήματα κτλ.

⁶³ R. Carter, “The Chronology of Saint John Chrysostom's Early Life,” *Traditio* 18 (1962): 357–64; cf. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 28–35, 296–98; contrast Baur, *John Chrysostom*, 3, 85, 138, 180, who dates the ascetic period between 375 and 381. Though many have refused to date any of John's extant work to the period of his monastic retreat, there is no textual basis for this assumption, and A. Moulard, *Saint Jean Chrysostome: Sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris, 1941), 34–37, for one, has argued that his four early ascetic works—including *Adv. opp.*—date to precisely this period.

⁶⁴ Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomos*, 14.

⁶⁵ At *Adv. oppug.* 2.7, PG 47:341–42, John makes much of the fact that attackers could not hurt monks even if they tried, strongly implying that at the time of writing they were not trying. Similarly, at *Adv. oppug.* 2.9, PG 47: 348, John tells of a pagan father who tried but failed to convince imperial authorities to end his son's monastic career, a strong contrast to the ready willingness of authorities in the first book to take on monks; cf. below, pp. 106–7. See a similar situation in the story at *Adv. oppug.* 3.12, PG 47:369–70.

⁶⁶ Valentinian I and Gratian were, at any rate, reputed to have been Nicene.

look at the context of the reference reinforces Montfaucon's reading. In the section where the reference occurs, Chrysostom draws a comparison between the current situation and that of the Jews under Artaxerxes I, when the Samaritans convinced the Persian governors to write to the king and encourage him to stop the reconstruction of the temple lest the Jews grow too strong and threaten Persian tax revenues (Ezra 4:6–23). He notes a major difference, however, in that these attacks were initiated by barbarians (βάρβαροι) who held different beliefs from the Jews, whereas the current persecution occurred “while our emperors live in piety.” The contrast is thus between believer and nonbeliever, not between orthodox and heretic. Kelly also misses a similar reference in book 2 to “emperors that are pious” (βασιλέων ὄντων εὐσεβῶν), where the meaning is even clearer, for here Chrysostom draws a contrast between such pious emperors and their opposites, pagan rulers (ἐλλήνων κρατούντων).⁶⁷

Moreover, there is good reason to assume that Chrysostom would have deliberately played up the piety of the emperor under whom he was writing, even if he disagreed with his Christology. A savvy rhetorician never attacked a living emperor directly but tended instead to redirect blame against that emperor's advisors. This is precisely the technique employed by Chrysostom when he draws the comparison from Ezra, where the good king was being misled by his wicked ministers. In fact, many of Chrysostom's contemporaries were equally quick to flatter the emperor's *eusebeia* even when they disagreed entirely with his Christology. Thus both Gregory of Nazianzos and Ephraem Syrus repeatedly praised the “piety” of Constantius II in orations and poems written in the early 360s even though both strongly disagreed with that emperor's homoian Christology.⁶⁸ More important, Epiphanius of Salamis, a staunch Nicene, praised Valens himself as a “pious and most reverent and God-loving emperor” in a passage written in 377.⁶⁹ Here Epiphanius goes on to criticize Valens's advisors without actually attacking the emperor, for, like Chrysostom, Epiphanius was too clever to be caught accusing the emperor of heresy. Finally, in several letters written by Basil under Valens, including the one mentioned above about monks attacked by Arians, we find a very similar contrast drawn between the persecutions of yore—conducted by pagan persecutors—and those at present—perpetrated by those who call themselves Christian.⁷⁰ This rhetorical ploy—feigned astonishment that supposedly pious Christians could be attacking the church—was a commonplace. There are thus strong reasons to side with Montfaucon and to see no hindrance to a 375 dating for book 1 even despite the reference to “emperors living in piety.”

There is also good reason, quite independently of the references to violence against monks, to believe that book 1 of *Adversus oppugnatores* was written under Valens. In chapter 7 of this book, Chrysostom points out that the situation faced by his world is worse than political tyranny, for all are plagued by a “wicked demon” who overturns the moral order. Here again Chrysostom avoids directly implicating Valens by shifting the blame onto this

⁶⁷ *Adv. oppug.* 2.9, PG 47:344.

⁶⁸ *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours 4–5 Contre Julien*, ed. J. Bernardi, SC 309 (Paris, 1983), *Or.* 4.3, 33–42, 48, *Or.* 5.16, 17, pp. 88, 130–42, 151–52, 324–26; *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und contra Julianum*, trans. Ed. Beck, CSCO 175, *Scriptores Syri* 79 (Louvain, 1957), *Contra Julianum*, 1.12, 2.19, 2.25, 3.8, 3.10, 4.15, pp. 67, 74–75, 78, 83.

⁶⁹ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.13.1–3, vol. 3, p. 163: Οὐάλεντος τοῦ θεοσεβοῦς βασιλέως καὶ εὐλαβεστάτου καὶ θεοφιλοῦς.

⁷⁰ Basil, *Epp.* 139, 257, 266, vol. 2, p. 57, vol. 3, pp. 98–99, 133–34.

demon, clearly Satan, but the problems caused by Satan seem to have specific, contemporary bearing on the social and political situation at the end of Valens's reign: "Then, as if from some acropolis, he [the demon] sends defiled and cursed squadrons against all, not merely splitting up marriages (γάμους διασπῶν), nor just wheeling and dealing in money (χρήματα πέμπων καὶ φέρων), nor working unjust slaughters (σφαγὰς ἐργαζόμενος ἀδίκους), but even something much worse than this, seducing the soul, once in harmony with God, and surrendering it to his impure guardsmen (ἐκδιδούς δὲ τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις αὐτοῦ δορυφόροις) and compelling it to bed down with them."⁷¹ Here we seem to have, rolled into one allusive passage, oblique references to Valens's notoriously lax and much criticized leniency toward divorce,⁷² his sweeping and costly currency reform,⁷³ his savage executions of imperial citizens on charges of magic and treason—which John witnessed personally in 372⁷⁴—and his recruitment of monks.

There is thus good reason to date the first book of *Adversus oppugnatores* to the reign of Valens. Indeed, there even seems to be an oblique allusion to the drafting of monks into imperial service. More importantly, however, the book is larded with many more direct references to the violence being perpetrated against monks as described in Jerome and the sources already presented. As noted, Chrysostom paints a scenario in the first book where he is taken aback at reports from a friend who explains the scale of the violence: "There are certain people who even now dare things like those the barbarians do, though much more illicit than these. For they drive out those who conduct our version of philosophy everywhere, and they forbid them entirely from speaking out with every sort of threat, and from teaching anything of this sort to any person."⁷⁵ Already at the beginning of the dialogue, then, we understand that monks are being driven from their dwellings and forbidden to teach others their monastic lifestyle. Waxing more specific, John's friend goes on to report:

Like warriors who, having achieved great success in battles and set up trophies, rejoice in recounting their victories, so too these [persecutors] are happy about their own daring accomplishments. And you will hear one saying, "I first laid hands on that monk and beat him with blows (πληγὰς ἐνέτεινα)." And another, "I myself found their place of retreat before the rest." "But I incited the governor more than the others (τὸν δικαστὴν ἐγὼ μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων παρώξυνα)," says a third; and another offers the prison and the horrible things in it and the fact of having dragged these holy men through the agora as an object of praise.⁷⁶

In the same passage, the friend goes on to marvel at how these injustices were perpetrated by Christians and how pagans consequently found them all the more amusing. We thus have direct evidence that monks were actively pursued, imprisoned, tried by imperial authorities, and beaten. In the chapters that follow, we see over and over again references to monks being dragged into court and beaten: "the dragging out of these holy and miracu-

⁷¹ *Adv. oppug.* 1.7, PG 47:328.

⁷² See A. Arjava, "Divorce in Later Roman Law," *Arctos* 22 (1988): 5–21, with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 267–68.

⁷³ See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 299–303.

⁷⁴ See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 218–34, with special reference to John Chrysostom, *In Act. Apost. Hom.* XXXVIII, 5, PG 60:274–76.

⁷⁵ *Adv. oppug.* 1.2, PG 47:320–21.

⁷⁶ *Adv. oppug.* 1.2, PG 47:322.

lous men of God and their dismemberment once they are pulled into court and beaten (σπαράσσεσθαι συρομένους εἰς δικαστήρια καὶ τυπτομένους), and the other things which I have just narrated";⁷⁷ "not only for persecutions, nor just for beatings or imprisonments or murders or killings (οὐδὲ πληγῶν, οὐδὲ δεσμοτηρίων καὶ φόνων καὶ σφαγῆς) did he [Christ] establish this great reward, but also for insult alone and curses";⁷⁸ "in what category should we place these new lawgivers of this revolutionary and strange law (τοὺς νέους τούτους νομοθέτας τῆς καινῆς ταύτης καὶ ἀτοπωτάτης νομοθεσίας), who drive out the teachers of virtue with more impudence than others do the teachers of evil and who fight more against those wishing to correct sin than against sinners themselves."⁷⁹ Here there can be little question that we are dealing with direct allusions to the law reported in Jerome's *Chronicle*. More important, because we can assume that Chrysostom's friend was reporting events in and around Antioch, his testimony further confirms the reports in Basil and Theodoret that the persecution struck Syria in addition to Egypt.

IV. *VITA ISAACII*

Another indication that Valens actually drafted monks into service comes in the hagiographical *Life of Isaac*. Isaac was an ascetic who played the decisive role in establishing Nicene monasteries in Constantinople at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries. The earliest testimony on his activity, dating to ca. 450, comes in the ecclesiastical history of Sozomen, who reports that the monk encountered Valens as the emperor was departing for the battle of Adrianople and that he implored Valens to return churches to the Nicenes if he himself wished to return victorious.⁸⁰ Angered by this affront, Valens ordered Isaac arrested and promised to execute him on his return, whereupon the monk predicted Valens's death by fire. Sozomen's report is reworked with some rhetorical coloring by Theodoret and is again recycled in Theophanes.⁸¹ Isaac's story also appears in the twelfth-century chronographer Zonaras, who seems to have had a source other than Sozomen for his version. In addition to minor differences from Sozomen's brief report, Zonaras adds that, after the battle, Isaac recognized that Valens had died even before reports reached Constantinople, because he had miraculously smelled the smoke of his cremated body. Precise confirmation of this prediction, says Zonaras, was soon delivered by survivors of the battle.⁸²

Zonaras's source for this story must have been one of the versions of the *Life of Isaac*, which has come down to us in several texts. Indeed, one epitome of the *Life* that survives in three synaxaria now in Oxford repeats in greater detail the story of how Isaac claimed

⁷⁷ *Adv. oppug.* 1.3, PG 47:323.

⁷⁸ *Adv. oppug.* 1.4, PG 47:324.

⁷⁹ *Adv. oppug.* 1.8, PG 47:331–32. See also *Adv. oppug.* 1.4, PG 47:325, which compares the current persecutors with Jews who "beat, insulted, and covered the holy apostles with painful glory."

⁸⁰ Sozomen, 6.40.1, p. 301.

⁸¹ Theodoret, *HE* 4.34.1–3, p. 272; Theophanes, a.m. 5870, p. 65. For Theodoret's use of Sozomen, see L. Jeep, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu den griechischen Kirchenhistorikern*, Jahrbuch für classische Philologie Supplement 14 (Leipzig, 1884), 155; A. Güldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Theodoret von Kyrrhos: Eine Untersuchung ihrer Quellen* (Halle, 1889), 41–49.

⁸² *Ioannis Zonarae Epitome Historiarum* [hereafter Zonaras], ed. L. Dindorf (Leipzig, 1870), 13.16.17–19, 26–27, vol. 3, p. 222.

to have smelled the burnt bones of Valens for seven days before messengers arrived to confirm his grisly death.⁸³ This synaxarion version is also closely related to one of the two recensions of the complete *Life of Isaac* transmitted in volume 7 of the *Acta sanctorum* under 30 May. This text, written in Greek, was found at St. Mark's in Venice and translated into Latin by P.-F. Zini, whose version is reprinted in the *AASS*.⁸⁴ This shorter version of the *Life* is also later than the longer and more reliable recension printed in the *AASS* (from a Vatican manuscript in Greek), which can be dated on internal grounds to the sixth century.⁸⁵ Both recensions clearly trace to an earlier archetype, for both have elements in common with the synaxarion version, but both also omit the story of Isaac's uncanny detection of Valens's burning bones. There seems then to have been an original recension which formed the basis for all three hagiographical versions—the synaxaria, the shorter life, and the longer life—and for Sozomen's and Zonaras's independent notices on Isaac.

The various recensions of the *Life of Isaac* report a more or less consistent story. Isaac, a monk from the East, comes to Constantinople in the period when it was plagued by Arianism. There he encounters Emperor Valens on several different days shortly before the battle of Adrianople. Both of the lives in the *AASS* report four separate encounters during each of which Isaac repeats the refrain: "O Emperor, open the churches of the orthodox and you will defeat your enemies and return in peace."⁸⁶ After the third such encounter, Valens orders the monk to be thrown into a briar patch and left to die, but two (or three) angels save him for a final confrontation. In this last encounter, Isaac goes so far as to predict Valens's demise, whereupon the emperor has him arrested by his generals Saturninus and Victor and imprisoned to await judgment after the battle. Instead, of course, Valens is killed, and after the return of the army to Constantinople under the new emperor, Theodosius I (i.e., late in 380), Saturninus and Victor have Isaac freed, mostly on the strength of his miraculous prophecy. They then proceed to engage each other in a contest to construct a suitable dwelling for the ascetic, with Saturninus offering a property just outside the Xerolophos gate in the region of the Psamatheia. The longer life continues with a brief narrative of Isaac's involvement in ecclesiastical affairs and imperial politics, assisted by the patronage of Saturninus. It recounts Isaac's success in attracting ascetics to his monastery, most notably the former *scholarius* Dalmatus (sometimes Dalmatius), who reconstructed

⁸³ F. Halkin, "Le synaxaire grec de Christ Church, à Oxford," *AB* 66 (1948): 75–80 at 77: ἐπὶ τὰ ἡμέραι διήλθον μετὰ τὸ πληρωθῆναι με τῆς τῶν ὁστέων αὐτοῦ ὁσμῆς. This text is catalogued as *BHG* 956b. The same story is also reported in *Landolfi Sagacis Additamenta ad Pauli Historiam Romanam*, ed. C. Halm, *MGH, AA* 2 (Berlin, 1877), 12.187.20, p. 346. Similar tales reporting miraculous long-distance announcements of the death of an important personage are catalogued in M. Whitby, trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, *Translated Texts for Historians* 33 (Liverpool, 2000), 206 n. 21.

⁸⁴ *AASS* Maii 7:611–12 (247–58 in the Antwerp edition of 1688) = *BHG* 955.

⁸⁵ *AASS* Maii 7:598–610 (258–60 in the Antwerp edition of 1688) = *BHG* 956. F. Nau, "Sur les mots ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟΣ et ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΟΜΕΝΟΣ et sur plusieurs texts grecs relatifs à Saint Étienne," *ROC* 11 (1906): 198–216 at 200, offers excerpts from a third complete life in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms 1453, fols. 225v–226. Unfortunately, the full text remains unpublished. An epitome clearly deriving from the longer recension of the *Life* also survives in *Synaxarium CP*, 716–18.

⁸⁶ The prediction is a common thread through all of the reports on Isaac: Sozomen, 6.40.1, p. 301; Theodoret, *HE* 4.34.2–3, p. 272; Zonaras, 13.16.17, p. 222; *Vita Isaacii* 1.5–7, 2.3–4 (*AASS* Maii 7:602–3, 611); *Synaxarium CP*, 716; Halkin, "Le synaxaire," 76. See also Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, vol. 2 (B. Latyšev, *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt*, 2 vols. [Petrograd, 1912], 242–43) cited below, note 91.

the building into a large and influential cloister named—after himself—the Dalmation.⁸⁷ Finally, the lives conclude with Isaac's death, which the longer life dates to 26 May 383,⁸⁸ and the transference of his monastery to the control of his disciple Dalmatus.

Despite their general accuracy and surprising precision on certain points,⁸⁹ these hagiographical texts, like most, have serious historical shortcomings. Foremost among them is the date of Isaac's death. Many of the details reported in the lives of Isaac are also reported in the extant versions of the *Life of Dalmatus*⁹⁰ and a tenth-century menologion account of the *Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Isaac, Faustus, and Dalmatus*.⁹¹ Yet the most reliable of these lives indicate that, immediately following Isaac's death, Dalmatus was consecrated as archimandrite of his monastery by Atticus, the metropolitan of Constantinople.⁹² Atticus was patriarch from 406 to 425, rendering a death date for Isaac in 383 impossible.⁹³ Building on this discrepancy, J. Pargoire demonstrated that the Isaac of the *Vitae Isaacii* and the *Lives of Dalmatus* must surely be synonymous with the Isaac reported by Palladius and Sozomen as the monastic leader who heckled John Chrysostom during the Synod of the Oak in 403 and eventually helped secure his permanent exile the following year.⁹⁴ The editors of Isaac's life—no doubt the fifth- through seventh-century monks serving in his Constantinopolitan foundation—have thus conveniently truncated their narratives in order to whitewash Isaac's record as a persecutor of the great Golden Mouth. Given their willingness to distort historical reality for the sake of glorifying Isaac, we should beware that similar distortions might have been involved in covering up equally unsavory activities, like military service.

⁸⁷ For the location of the monastery, see R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1964), 333–34; idem, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, I: Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), 82–84.

⁸⁸ *Vita Isaacii* 1.18 (AASS Maii 7:610). The shorter life, by contrast, dates Isaac's death to 26 March 383: *Vita Isaacii* 2.8 (AASS Maii 7:612); and *Synaxarium CP*, 718 to 30 May.

⁸⁹ As, for example, their correct report of the names of Valens's generals, Saturninus and Victor (*Vita Isaacii* 1.8, 10, 14 and 2.4–5 = AASS Maii 7:602–5, 608, and 611; *Synaxarium CP* 718); the longer life's precise dating for Theodosius's first arrival in Constantinople on 24 Nov. 380 (*Vita Isaacii* 1.10 = AASS Maii 7:605); and its correct report—in contrast with most ecclesiastical sources—that both Gratian and Theodosius fought the Goths in 380 (*Vita Isaacii* 1.6 = AASS Maii 7:604). Cf. P. J. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), 153–55.

⁹⁰ M. I. Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν ἑορτολόγιον (Constantinople, 1899), 144–48 = BHG 481; A. Banduri, *Imperium Orientale, sive antiquitates constantinopolitanae in quattuor partes distributae* (Paris, 1711), 2:697–710 = BHG 482, with Latin translation at AASS Aug. 1:214–25 = BHG 483.

⁹¹ Latyšev, *Menologii*, 2:242–45 = BHG 956e.

⁹² *Vita Dalmati* 8 (Banduri, *Imperium*, 698c–699a = AASS Aug. 1:220–21); Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 7 (Latyšev, *Menologii*, 2:244). By contrast, the version published by Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν, 146 has Dalmatus consecrated under Nectarius (bishop 381–397), but as Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν, 143–44 points out, the chronology of this entire recension is extremely confused.

⁹³ A. Cameron and J. Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, 1993), 72–75, date Isaac's death as late as 416. The year 383 represents the year of Dalmatus's entry into Isaac's monastery—datable at *Vita Dalmati* 12 (Banduri, *Imperium*, 701b = AASS Aug. 1:221)—rather than the date of his consecration as archimandrite, as seen already in G. Karo et al., eds., *Callinici de vita s. Isaacii liber* (Leipzig, 1895), xvi.

⁹⁴ J. Pargoire, "Date de la mort de Saint Isaac," *EO* 2 (1899): 138–45, with Palladius, *Dial.* 6.16, 8.220, pp. 126, 176; Sozomen, 8.9.4, 19.3, pp. 362, 375; cf. Photius *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, *Codices* 1–84, ed. R. Henry (Paris, 1959), 59.18b–19a, pp. 55–56. See also Karo et al., *Callinici*, xv–xviii; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, "Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom," in *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, ed. A. Moffatt (Canberra, 1984), 85–111 at 90–94; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 123–24; D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002), 169–77, 190–99.

Fortunately for history, Isaac's hagiographers were far from successful at masking his involvement in Valens's army. The first notable indication that Isaac may have been among those drafted by Valens is his place of origin. Both published versions of the life and the synaxaria—as well as the best version of the *Life of Dalmatus*—state openly that Isaac came from the East.⁹⁵ Though the editor of the longer recension in the *AASS*, D. Cardono, argued that this meant Asia Minor,⁹⁶ Nau's identification of Isaac with Chrysostom's monastic persecutor proves otherwise, for Palladius refers to Isaac directly as a Syrian.⁹⁷ There is no obvious reason why a Syrian monk would travel of his own accord to Constantinople at this period. Though there were homoiousian ascetics established in the city under Bishop Macedonius in the 350s, these conducted their *askesis* inside the walls and in a fashion quite different from that adopted by their Syrian contemporaries.⁹⁸ Perhaps for this reason, the longer life emphasizes its (mistaken) contention that Isaac was actually the first true monk in the eastern capital.⁹⁹ Yet neither life offers a satisfactory explanation for Isaac's move, for while the shorter recension says nothing of his motives, the longer argues that Isaac was ordered by God to travel the thousand kilometers between Syria and Constantinople to fight Arianism there.¹⁰⁰ Had the defense of Nicene orthodoxy been Isaac's goal, he would hardly have needed to travel so far to pursue it, for Arians controlled the see of Antioch until after Valens's death. Theodoret reports that at least two Syrian monks, Aphraates and Julian Saba, deliberately traveled there to argue the Nicene cause during the reign of Valens.¹⁰¹ After all, Valens remained in this eastern capital until the spring of 378, making this rather than Constantinople the center of ecclesiastical politics.¹⁰² Isaac must then have had some other motive for traveling so far from his homeland. The best and most logical explanation for his migration to Thrace is that he was brought there in

⁹⁵ *Vita Isaacii* 1.4 (*AASS Maii* 7:602): ἦν τις ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς ἀνατολῆς; *Vita Isaacii* 2.2 (*AASS Maii* 7.611): “ab Oriente profectus est”; *Vita Dalmati* 1 (Banduri, *Imperium*, 2.697 = *AASS Aug.* 1.219): παρεγένετο ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον; Halkin, “Le synaxaire,” 76: ἐξελθὼν ἐξ ἀνατολῶν; *Synaxarium CP*, 716: ἦν ἐξ ἀνατολῆς.

⁹⁶ *AASS Maii* 7:599.

⁹⁷ Palladius, *Dial.* 6.16, p. 126. More on Isaac's Semitic origin in Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, 168–69 n. 114. It is perhaps more than coincidence that Isaac joined forces with Acacius, bishop of Syrian Beroea—another monk who had been attacked under Valens (cf. above, note 31)—in attacking John: Palladius, *Dial.* 6.8–27, pp. 126–28.

⁹⁸ For these Macedonian monastic communities, see Rufinus, *HE* 10.26, pp. 989–90; Socrates, 2.38.4, p. 164; Sozomen, 4.2.3, 20.2, 27.3–4, pp. 141, 170, 184, with G. Dagron, “Les moines et la ville: Le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine (451),” *TM* 4 (1970): 229–76 at 238–39, 246–53; Elm, *Virgins*, 111–12.

⁹⁹ *Vita Isaacii* 1.16 (*AASS Maii* 7:609): οὐ γὰρ ἦν τότε ἐνταῦθα ἵχνος μοναχοῦ. Cf. Callinicos *Vie d'Hypatios*, ed. G. Bartelink, SC 177 (Paris, 1971), 1.6, 11.1–4, pp. 75, 111; Theophanes, a.m. 6259, p. 443, with Dagron, “Les moines,” 231–38.

¹⁰⁰ *Vita Isaacii* 1.4 (*AASS Maii* 7:602); cf. the *Life of Dalmatus* reported in Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν, 145, which also attributes Isaac's motivation to divine inspiration.

¹⁰¹ Theodoret, *HE* 4.26.1–9, pp. 264–66; *Théodoret de Cyr Histoire des Moines de Syrie* [hereafter Theodoret, *HR*], vol. 1, ed. P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, SC 234 (Paris, 1977), 2.16–20, 8.5–8, pp. 230–40, 382–92; John Chrysostom, *In epist. ad Ephes. Hom. XXI*, 3, PG 62: 153; cf. S. H. Griffith, “Julian Saba, ‘Father of the Monks’ of Syria,” *JECrSt* 2 (1994): 185–216 at 193–95.

¹⁰² This situation changed when the emperor took up a more permanent residence in Constantinople in the late 4th century and thus attracted holy men to the area; cf. G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), 90–102; N. McLynn, “A Self-Made Holy Man: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen,” *JECrSt* 6 (1998): 463–83 at 480–82.

the train of Valens's expeditionary army, which came west from Antioch to face the Gothic revolt in the spring of 378.¹⁰³ Moreover, confirmation of Isaac's general unwillingness to reside in or around Constantinople is available in the longer life. As soon as he was freed from prison, this version reports, his chief desire was to return to the desert whence he had come, but he was dissuaded from this design by the pleadings of Saturninus and Victor and their offers to build him a hermitage in Constantinople.¹⁰⁴ It seems clear, then, that Isaac was in Constantinople not because he wanted to be but because, at least initially, he was forced to be.

The second indication that Isaac was drafted into Valens's army comes in the numerous references in the *Life*, and especially the longer recension, to his encounters with Valens in a military context. It must first be noted that, when Valens came west to face the Goths in 378, he spent very little time in Constantinople before continuing west to set up military operations in Thrace. The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* reports that he arrived in the city on 30 May and departed already on 11 June.¹⁰⁵ The emperor thus spent just two weeks in the capital before heading for the military camp of Melantias, 15 km west of the city, in order to prepare his army.¹⁰⁶ During Valens's stay in Constantinople, there would scarcely have been sufficient time for Isaac to have had the four encounters with him attested in both of the full recensions and the synaxaria.¹⁰⁷ Nor is there likely to have been adequate occasion for multiple meetings between the emperor and the monk while Valens was in the capital, for the emperor no doubt remained well guarded in the palace, especially because there were riots in the city at the time.¹⁰⁸ After moving to Melantias, by contrast, Valens spent the better part of two months training his troops there, and Ammianus is quite explicit that he regularly met with them to offer encouragement.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the longer life makes it quite clear that Isaac's encounters with Valens occurred in a military setting. The hagiographer introduces the first encounter with: "The emperor was then assembling his army and preparing it to march out against the enemy. And [Isaac] approached as the emperor was going out to inspect his army on the training ground."¹¹⁰ There was no such training ground in Constantinople, the nearest garrison being the Hebdomon 7 miles out from the city center. In 378 Valens seems to have bypassed even

¹⁰³ Alternatively, Isaac may have come west with advance forces Valens had sent to Thrace in 377 under the command of the same Saturninus who would later become Isaac's patron: Ammianus, 31.8.3–5, pp. 252–53.

¹⁰⁴ *Vita Isaacii* 1.14 (AASS Maii 7:608); cf. *Synaxarium CP*, 718.

¹⁰⁵ *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. R. W. Burgess (Oxford, 1993), *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, s.a. 378, p. 240; cf. Socrates, 4.38.1, 5, p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ Ammianus, 31.11.1, p. 259: "venit Constantinopolim, ubi moratus paucissimos dies . . . ipse ad Melanthiada villam Caesarianam profectus."

¹⁰⁷ Sozomen, who describes only one encounter between Valens and Isaac, states explicitly that it occurred as Valens prepared to depart from Constantinople (6.40.1, p. 301; cf. Theodoret, *HE* 4.34.1, p. 272). His description is too abbreviated, however, to be relied on for points of detail.

¹⁰⁸ On the riots, see Ammianus, 31.11.1, p. 259; Socrates, 4.38.2–4, p. 272; Sozomen, 6.39.2–4, 40.2, pp. 300–301; cf. *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller (Paris, 1851), *Joannis Antiocheni fragmentum*, 184.2, p. 608; Theophanes, a.m. 5870, p. 65; Cedrenos, *Historiarum Compendium*, vol. 1, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB 34 (Bonn, 1838), p. 549.

¹⁰⁹ Ammianus, 31.11.1, p. 260: "militem stipendio fovebat et alimentis et blanda crebritate sermonum."

¹¹⁰ *Vita Isaacii* 1.5 (AASS Maii 7:602): τότε δὴ ὁ Βασιλεὺς συνήγαγε τὰ στρατόπεδα αὐτοῦ, παρασκευαζόμενος ἐξελεῖν κατὰ τῶν ὑπεναντίων. Καὶ ἐγένετο, ἐξιόντος ἐπὶ τὸν κάμπον τρακτεῦσαι τὰ στρατόπεδα αὐτοῦ. . . ; cf. *Vita Isaacii* 2.3 (AASS Maii 7:611): "cum igitur ad bellum proficisceretur Imperator"; *Synaxarium CP*, 716.

this outlying camp in favor of Melantias.¹¹¹ The training-ground confrontation is thus likely to have occurred at Valens's military camp there.

There are also intimations of a military context in the particulars reported of Isaac's encounters with Valens. In their third encounter, as described in both lives as well as the lives of Dalmatus, Isaac actually grabs the bridle of the emperor's horse as he moves out to exercise his troops.¹¹² Valens is likely to have been riding his horse only in a military context. Moreover, at the end of this third encounter, Valens orders Isaac to be thrown into a marshy swamp filled with briars.¹¹³ This topographical description, though typical of many landscapes in Thrace, does not fit Constantinople, but corresponds perfectly with what we know of Melantias, which sat at the confluence of the Melas and Athyras rivers and was notoriously marshy.¹¹⁴ Similarly in their fourth encounter Isaac is able to grab the bridle of the emperor's horse, again a strong indication that we are dealing with a military setting.¹¹⁵ When Valens finally has Isaac arrested, he orders his *magistri militum* Saturninus and Victor to take him into custody, and these same generals must later plead with Theodosius I to have him released.¹¹⁶ This notice is perhaps most telling of all, for by this period there was a strict divide among military, civilian, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Valens and his brother Valentinian upheld the laws forbidding the use of military courts by civilians—which most monks were considered—and both also recognized the right of clerics to be tried in ecclesiastical courts.¹¹⁷ The fact that Isaac was arrested and detained by two generals strongly implies that, in Valens's eyes and indeed in the eyes of his *magistri militum*, Isaac was a soldier. Finally, Isaac's most devoted follower and eventual successor, Dalmatus, was himself a high-level soldier who had served in the *secunda schola scutariorum* before relinquishing his career to become a monk.¹¹⁸ While Dalmatus was certainly not himself a monk prior to his service—indeed his *vitae* reveal that he had been married and had a son who later succeeded him as archimandrite—it is not unreasonable to assume that Dalmatus may have first encountered Isaac in a military setting. Indeed, if Dalmatus served under Valens, he would surely have witnessed Isaac's encounter with the emperor, for his corps was among the elite group of imperial guardsmen who remained forever at the emperor's side.

¹¹¹ The Hebdomon was on the Via Egnatia, which provided access to Macedonia rather than Thrace, where the Goths were. On the lack of a garrison in Constantinople, see Dagron, *Naissance*, 108–15, 355–58.

¹¹² *Vita Isaacii* 1.6 (AASS Maii 7:602): παραταξαμένου τοῦ Βασιλέως, καὶ ἐξιόντος εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, προσήλθεν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὁ μακάριος καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενος τοῦ χαλινοῦ τοῦ ἵππου; cf. *Vita Isaacii* 2.4 (AASS Maii 7:611): “ar-reptoque equi ipsius fraeno.”

¹¹³ *Vita Isaacii* 1.6 (AASS Maii 7:603): ὁρᾷ πάντα τὸν τόπον ἐκεῖνον ὥσπερ λίμνην συνεστῶσαν, οὐχ ὕδατος, ἀλλὰ βορβόρου δυσώδους.

¹¹⁴ U. Wanke, *Die Gotenkriege des Valens: Studien zu Topographie und Chronologie im unteren Donauraum von 366 bis 378 n. Chr.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), 44–45.

¹¹⁵ *Vita Isaacii* 1.7 (AASS Maii 7:603); cf. Theophanes, a.m. 5870, p. 65; Zonaras, 13.16.17, p. 222; *Synaxarium CP*, 718.

¹¹⁶ *Vita Isaacii* 1.8, 10 (AASS Maii 7:603–5); 2.4–5 (AASS Maii 7:611–12); cf. Halkin, “Le synaxaire,” 77; Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 3 (Latyšev, *Menologii*, 2:243); *Synaxarium CP*, 718.

¹¹⁷ On the division between civilian and military jurisdiction, see *CTh* 2.1.2, 9, pp. 71–72, 75; cf. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part VIII*, ed. A. S. Hunt (London, 1911), no. 1101, pp. 166–69 (a. 367/70). On the separate jurisdiction granted to clerics, see *CTh* 16.2.12, pp. 838–39; *Sirmondian Constitution* 3, 6, 15, pp. 909–11, 919–20, with Basil, *Ep.* 225, vol. 3, pp. 21–23.

¹¹⁸ *Vita Dalmati* 1 (Banduri, *Imperium*, 697a = AASS Aug. 1:219); Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 4 (Latyšev, *Menologii*, 2:243); Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν, 145.

The final apparent correspondence between what we learn from Jerome's notice and what we find in the Life of Isaac is that Valens's initial line of prosecution against Isaac was beating, with both whips and cudgels. In the longer recension, Isaac is twice beaten, first with whips and then by a mob of soldiers who used "switches, whips, fists, and cudgels."¹¹⁹ While beatings were not uncommon for any civilian of low status, the image of a gang beating by fellow soldiers parallels precisely the standard punishment for military desertion (*fustigatio*) and corresponds exactly with Jerome's notice on the beating of resisters to Valens's order that monks serve.

Thus a Syrian monk happened to come to the area of Constantinople at precisely the time when Valens was scraping together auxiliary troops from all sources in the East; he had four chances to confront the emperor, all of them in specifically military contexts; when he was condemned for insubordination, he was beaten in a fashion patently reminiscent of *fustigatio*; after surviving and continuing to challenge the emperor, he was committed to the custody of two *magistri militum*; and after his release he wished only to return to his former ascetic life in Syria. It seems probable, if not ultimately verifiable, that Isaac found himself among the monks forcibly conscripted into military service by Valens. Because of his success in predicting the nature of Valens's demise, he would later become something of a local hero in Thrace. Thus when his hagiographers sat down to write—and then reedit—his life, it became important to eliminate or at least gloss over its less honorable features. We have already seen at least one example of this with their drastic redating of his death so as to avoid implicating him in the controversy over John Chrysostom. It seems likely that they chose to cover up his conscription as well, though here again their efforts were not entirely successful, given the number of indications pointing to military service which they left behind.

V. CONTEXTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Jerome thus seems to have been correct in his report that Valens not only violently attacked monks, but also ordered them into military service on pain of beating with rods. These measures seem both extreme and, in retrospect, misguided, for neither did they succeed in curtailing the rise of this new movement, nor do they seem to have helped Valens appreciably in filling his manpower needs or advancing his reputation. They were, however, both understandable and in many senses predictable within the context of the late fourth century. This is not the place to undertake an extensive discussion of attitudes toward the burgeoning monastic movement in the late fourth century,¹²⁰ but by way of conclusion, it is worthwhile to examine briefly where Valens's actions fit on the continuum of contemporary reactions to monasticism.

¹¹⁹ *Vita Isaacii* 1.5–6 (AASS Maii 7:602): ταῖς φραγέλλαις ἐμάστιζον αὐτόν . . . γίνεται οὖν ἐκ τούτου συνδρομὴ πλήθους καὶ διαφόρως ἕκαστος ἐμάστιζον αὐτόν, οἱ μὲν βέργαις, οἱ δὲ φραγέλλαις, ἕτεροι δὲ πυγμαῖς, ἄλλοι δὲ ῥωπαλοῖς. Cf. Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 3 (Latyšev, *Menologii*, 2:243); *Synaxarium CP*, 718.

¹²⁰ For recent work on the origins of monasticism, see Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*; D. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford, 1966); Barone Adesi, *Monachesimo*, 3–72; Elm, *Virgins*; S. H. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism," in *Asceticism*, ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (Oxford, 1995), 220–45; J. Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism* (Washington, D.C., 1995); J. E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1999); Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*.

As the new monastic movement took off in the middle of the fourth century, it was by no means universally praised among contemporaries. As might be expected, pagans reacted with particular acerbity to what they regarded as the idleness, the license, and the hypocrisy of this new breed of Christian ascetics. Eunapius in particular leveled attacks at monks for undermining the state by not reproducing, refusing to serve in the army, and failing to serve in any other capacity.¹²¹ Both he and Libanius accused monks of feigning temperance while practicing overindulgence, and both were especially critical of monks for their unbridled violence in the name of religion.¹²² Christians, too, often questioned the value of asceticism and quickly came to understand that the very holiness that empowered Christian monks could also be exploited as an excuse to wreak violence against opponents, even fellow Christians.¹²³ John Chrysostom, who so harshly criticized Valens's violent measures against the monks in 375, soon turned more sour on monks and by 403 found himself ousted from the see of Constantinople by a group of riotous ascetics—led by Isaac—many of whom his own supporters later murdered.¹²⁴ Valens was himself probably under no illusions that he was, as Rufinus would have it, declaring “war against those living in peace,” for the Egyptian monks on whom he unleashed Lucius in 375 had already proven themselves more than capable of violence and would do so again and again in the decades to come.¹²⁵

Nor was Valens simply attempting to control a potential source of social unrest when he attacked the monks of Nitria—and elsewhere—and ordered them to serve in the mines or the army. We have already seen from his law of 373 that he regarded the monastic enterprise as little more than an excuse for idleness and desertion. Here too he was not alone, for many Christians looked askance at this new movement as both a disruption of the normal social order and a threat to more moderate ways of expressing the faith.¹²⁶ Indeed, the

¹²¹ As reported in *Zosime Histoire Nouvelle* [hereafter Zosimus], 3 vols., ed. F. Paschoud (Paris, 1971–89), 5.23.4, vol. 3, p. 35 with the commentary of Paschoud at vol. 3, pp. 178–81.

¹²² *Libanii Opera*, ed. R. Foerster, vols. 1–3, *Orationes 1–50* (Leipzig, 1903–6), *Orr.* 2.32, 30.8–9, 45.26, vol. 1, p. 249, vol. 3, pp. 91–92, 371–72; *Eunapii Vitae Sophistarum*, ed. I. Giangrande (Rome, 1956), 11.6–8, p. 39; cf. *Rutilius Claudius Numatianus De Reditu Suo Sive Iter Gallicum*, vol. 1, ed. E. Doblhofer (Heidelberg, 1972), 1.439–52, 515–26, pp. 120, 126; *L'empereur Julien oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols., ed. J. Bidez, C. Lacombrade, and G. Rochefort (Paris, 1932–64), *Or.* 7.18 (224bc), vol. 2.1, p. 70. See also D. H. Raynor, “Non-Christian Attitudes to Monasticism,” *StP* 18.2 (1989): 267–73.

¹²³ E.g., *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, vol. 10, *Epistularum Liber Decimus*, ed. M. Zelzer, CSEL 82 (Vienna, 1982), *Ep.* 41.27, pp. 160–61: “monachi multa scelera faciunt”; *CTh* 9.40.16, 10.3.1–2, pp. 504–5, 532; Sozomen, 4.2.3–4, p. 141; *Questions d'un païen à un chrétien (Consultationes Zacchei christiani et Apollonii philosophi)*, vol. 2, ed. J. L. Feiertag, SC 402 (Paris, 1994), 3.3, pp. 177–86. On monks as perpetrators of violence, see E. Wipszycka, “Le monachisme égyptien et les villes,” *TM* 12 (1994): 1–44 at 20–26, repr. in eadem, *Études sur le Christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité Tardive*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52 (Rome, 1996), 281–336; C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, Md., 1997), 258–77; Gaddis, “There Is No Crime,” 143–251.

¹²⁴ Zosimus, 5.23.4–5, vol. 3, p. 35; cf. Socrates, 6.16.1, p. 338; Sozomen, 8.18.1, p. 373, with T. E. Gregory, “Zosimus and the People of Constantinople,” *Byzantion* 43 (1973): 61–83. For John's increasing distaste for monasticism, see Brändle, “Chrysostomus,” 477–78; Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomos*, 35–61.

¹²⁵ Rufinus, *HE* 11.3, p. 1004; cf. Socrates, 4.22.6, p. 249. *Salviani Presbyteri Massiliensis Opera Omnia*, ed. F. Pauly, CSEL 8 (Vienna, 1883), *De gubernatione Dei*, 8.18–22, pp. 197–98, describes popular attacks against African monks in the early 5th century.

¹²⁶ Palanque et al., *Histoire*, 357–64; Kelly, *Jerome*, 104–15, 179–94; R. P. Vaggione, “Of Monks and Lounge Lizards: ‘Arians’, Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East,” in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams (Edinburgh, 1993), 181–214 at 207–10; cf. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, 146–58.

third book of John Chrysostom's *Adversus oppugnatores* is entirely devoted to the refutation of just such critics. Formal criticism of the monastic movement in the fourth century stretched back to at least 343 when a council was formed at Gangra to anathematize the more extreme forms of ascetic social withdrawal being practiced in Pontus and Armenia.¹²⁷ The Messalian controversy, which came into focus under Valens, was centered around the ascetic extremism of certain monastic practitioners.¹²⁸ In an outstanding new monograph, D. Caner has demonstrated that tremendous controversy brewed in the late fourth century over the many monks who chose to beg alms rather than working and thus drew criticism for their idleness (*argia*), recalling the rhetoric of Valens's law (*ignaviae sectatores*).¹²⁹ Monks had, as Valens would have agreed, established a dangerous degree of independence from social, ecclesiastical, and state power networks and thus became a target for societal, ecclesiastical, and state critique and coercion.

In many instances, even ardent supporters of late fourth-century monasticism proved to be harsh critics of various movements within the enterprise. Early monastic practice was, as we would expect, not uniform, and each of the styles which arose was subject to separate and sometimes scathing evaluation, even by fellow Christians. Both Jerome and—through the mouth of Aba Piamun—Cassian schematized these as either eremitic, coenobitic, or a third form representing a more urban-based but noncommunal lifestyle, sometimes referred to generically as apotactism.¹³⁰ This taxonomy, later canonized by Benedict in his rule,¹³¹ was clearly more schematic than the reality of actual fourth-century practice. Even so, it reflects something of the broad outlines of late antique monasticism. Among these three branches, apotactic asceticism is the earliest securely datable form in Egypt. The first attested use of the word *monachos* for “monk” appears in a papyrus of 324 which describes an apotactite who does not live under a common rule and who has regular contact with urban dwellers. Several other sources confirm that apotactic communities were widespread in early to mid fourth-century Egypt and particularly in and around Alexandria.¹³² Given that this is the period when semi-Arianism—in its various mid-fourth-century manifestations—was at its height, it is no coincidence that these Egyptian apotactites were often identified with the Arian cause.¹³³ Nor is it surprising that at precisely the same time, similar communities were founded in Constantinople under the

¹²⁷ See the canons and letter from the Council of Gangra in C. J. Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1907), 1:1029–45 = Mansi, 2:1095–1106; cf. Elm, *Virgins*, 106–11 with bibliography. T. D. Barnes, “The Date of the Council of Gangra,” *JTS* n.s. 40 (1989):121–24, attempts to redate the council to 355. This change would scarcely affect my argument here.

¹²⁸ A. Guillaumont, “Messaliens,” *DSp* 8:1074–83; C. Stewart, “Working the Earth of the Heart”: *The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts and Language to AD 431* (Oxford, 1991); K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimesalianismus: Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Kirchengeschichte*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 71 (Göttingen, 1998); Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 83ff.

¹²⁹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, passim.

¹³⁰ Jerome, *Ep.* 22.34, pp. 196–97; John Cassian, *Collationes*, 18.4, 7, pp. 14, 18–21. Jerome and Cassian use different names for this third form (*remnuoth/sarabaitae*) but appear to refer to the same phenomenon; cf. Wipszycka, “Le monachisme,” 3–9; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 7–11.

¹³¹ Cf. C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), 108–20.

¹³² *Columbia Papyri VII: Fourth-Century Documents from Karanis*, ed. R. S. Bagnall and N. Lewis, *American Studies in Papyrology* 20 (Missoula, Mont., 1979), no. 171, pp. 156–57, with E. A. Judge, “The Earliest Use of *Monachos* for ‘Monk’ (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism,” *JbAC* 20 (1977): 71–89.

¹³³ C. Haas, “The Arians of Alexandria,” *VChr* 47 (1993): 234–45 at 237–39; cf. Judge, “Earliest Use,” 84–85. More on the links between Arianism and apotactic asceticism in Vaggione, “Of Monks.” J. E. Goehring,

semi-Arian bishop Macedonius.¹³⁴ And recent research reveals that the Syrian ascetics of the early to mid-fourth century were also essentially apotactic.¹³⁵ Jerome's and Cassian's critiques are thus leveled at a form of monasticism which was at once older and, according to Cassian himself,¹³⁶ originally more widespread than the coenobitic and eremitic forms they preferred. To be sure, their schemes are oversimplified, but their assertions demonstrate a negative valuation of this older and in many ways less socially radical form which was, by virtue of its temporal precedence, more closely connected with the semi-Arian church.

As radical religious movements, anchoritic and coenobitic monasticism had the advantage of a heightened degree of rigor which allowed them the claim to religious privilege that eventually helped them prevail. Nevertheless, they were also helped along by the promotion of certain personalities and the occurrence of certain events. Chief among the personalities was surely Athanasius, who fostered the coenobites and above all the anchorites of Egypt and codified the latter lifestyle as the ultimate form of *askesis* in his *Life of Anthony*, published ca. 357. This text, which exercised a tremendous impact across the Mediterranean, played a crucial role in helping *anachoresis* displace the older, apotactic form.¹³⁷ But Athanasius did not simply redirect monastic practice with this manifesto, he also drew a direct link between Anthony's anchoritic purity and a staunch defense of Nicene Christology, thereby coopting future imitators of his Anthony to the Nicene cause.¹³⁸ And, quite apart from the impact of his writings, Athanasius used his influence with the new communities of Egypt to bolster his own power vis-à-vis both church and state.¹³⁹ By the time of his third exile (356–362), his ties with the communities around the Thebaid were strong enough that he took shelter from the imperial authorities by hiding among them. This provoked Constantius to send several of his generals into monastic communities as far south as Pbow in a failed effort to ferret out the renegade.¹⁴⁰ Far from hampering their resistance, however, Constantius actually valorized these monastic lifestyles with his encroachments when he failed to find Athanasius.

Valens did much the same with his assaults in 373 and 375. To be sure, he would scarcely have been interested in making fine distinctions among monastic styles. His

"Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt," *JECChrSt* 5 (1997): 61–83, cautions against too close an association between specific monastic communities and doctrinal affiliation; monks were driven more by ideologies of asceticism than of doctrine in their choice of community and lifestyle. Even so, in broad outlines, individual communities and thus their corresponding monastic styles tended to line up around specific doctrines.

¹³⁴ See above, note 98, esp. Dagron, "Les moines," 252–53; cf. Elm, *Virgins*, 106–36.

¹³⁵ Griffith, "Asceticism," with earlier bibliography, to which add Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomos*, 85–105.

¹³⁶ John Cassian, *Collationes*, 18.7, p. 21.

¹³⁷ See esp. D. Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995), 201–65, with earlier bibliography. Contrast Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, 19–28, 61–69.

¹³⁸ See esp. *Athanase d'Alexandrie Vie d'Antoine*, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, SC 400 (Paris, 1994), 69–70, pp. 314–18.

¹³⁹ Brakke, *Athanasius*, 80–141.

¹⁴⁰ *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae*, ed. F. Halkin, SubsHag 19 (Brussels, 1932), *First Greek Life of Pachomius*, 138, pp. 86–87; *Les vies coptes de Saint Pachôme et ses premiers successeurs*, ed. L. T. Lefort, Bibliothèque du Muséon 16 (Louvain, 1943), *Coptic Lives of Pachomius*, BO 180, pp. 197–200; *Fragments des vies de Pakhome, de Théodore et des premiers cénobites*; *MémMissCaire*, ed. E. Amélineau, 4 (Paris, 1895), pp. 604–5; cf. Barnes, *Athanasius*, 121; Martin, *Athanase*, 527–36; Brakke, *Athanasius*, 129–41. For Constantius's attacks on ascetics in Alexandria in 356, see J. E. Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 27 (Berlin, 1986), 282–87.

problem was with the movement as a whole, not its various subgroups. Nevertheless, insofar as the opponents of his semi-Arian Christology tended to congregate in anchoritic and coenobitic communities like those of Nitria and the Thebaid, they would have formed a more obvious target for his attacks. Unlike the apotactic monks who, as we have seen, tended to be associated with semi-Arianism, the sources link fourth-century anchorites and coenobites—Egyptian and otherwise—with the defense of Nicaea and portray the monks whom Valens persecuted as opponents of his Christology.¹⁴¹ Sozomen is quite explicit that Lucius undertook his rampage against the communities around Nitria because they were the prime opponents of his imposition of the homoian faith.¹⁴² And once in exile, the episcopal monks of Nitria whom Valens had attacked became virtual bellwethers of Nicene orthodoxy, receiving no less than three extant letters seeking confirmation of Nicene purity from sees across the empire.¹⁴³ Thus, while there can be no simple, one-to-one correspondence between Arian apotactics and Nicene anchorites and coenobites, the sources indicate that the monks Valens and his episcopal appointee Lucius attacked tended to be both Nicene and anchoritic or coenobitic. Destroying these monks' habitations, condemning them to imperial mines, and drafting them into the army would have seemed to Valens an ingenious means to eliminate Christological opponents while bolstering his own manpower resources. An unintended side effect may, however, have been the exertion of pressure on particular subgroups within the monastic movement. Because the project ultimately failed, however, these attacks eventually lent new strength to those communities which had been hit hardest. When Valens was killed in battle shortly after persecuting and torturing anchoritic and coenobitic monks and spreading them—and thus their lifestyle—all across the empire as exiles, his violence against these confessors must have given strength to their cause. In some sense, then, Valens helped crystallize Christian attitudes in favor of *anachoresis*. This is not to say that his persecution against the monks was the decisive factor in the growth of the movement. It was, however, one of the events that helped this new style of monasticism overtake an older and less radical ascetic practice.

University of Colorado, Boulder

¹⁴¹ Theodoret, *HE* 4.22.26–27, 35–36, 26.1–5, 27.1–5, 28.2, pp. 257–60, 264–68; Theodoret, *HR* 2.15, pp. 226–28; Sozomen, 6.27.10, p. 276. Wipszycka, “Le monachisme,” has demonstrated that, by the end of the 4th century, the Nicenes had considerable urban monasteries of their own in Egypt.

¹⁴² Sozomen, 6.20.1–5, p. 261.

¹⁴³ Basil, *Ep.* 265, vol. 3, 127–33; Facundus, *Pro def.* 4.2.47–51, pp. 116–17; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 72.11, vol. 3, pp. 265–67.